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Thoreau in Ukraine

Dianne Piper-Rybak

Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society . . . may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!" So ends *Walden's* penultimate paragraph, as Henry D. Thoreau recounts the story of a "strong and beautiful bug" that for several weeks had been heard gnawing its way out of an old table in a farmer's kitchen—a bug, he surmises, "from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it." I was reminded of this story that so strengthened Thoreau's "faith in a resurrection and immortality" during my September 2005 visit to Ukraine's National University of Ostroh Academy.

The purpose of my visit was to provide the students of the Foreign Language department the experience of being in an American university classroom, which would be a distinct departure from their traditional lecture hall filled with one hundred or so students, laboriously taking notes with no thought of asking questions or expressing opinions. The Academy's Foreign Language department offers majors in French, German, Polish, Latin, as well as English, which is considered the school's second language. Russian is noticeably not part of the curriculum, nor is it spoken on campus, signifying the significant nationalistic role the Academy has played since Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1994, the year that Ostroh Academy reopened under the direction of Dr. Ihor Pasichnyk—after a 356-year hiatus.

The town of Ostroh is ancient. The first known mention of it is in 1100, and by the fourteenth century, the Ostrozky family had built a castle and a church there, both of which are still standing and open to the public. In 1576, Prince Konstantyn Ostrozky founded the original Academy in an attempt to intellectually strengthen Ukraine's Orthodox clergy against Jesuit attempts to convert the country to Roman Catholicism. Its curriculum included the trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the quadrivium (mathematics, astronomy, geometry and music), as well as theology, philosophy, medicine, and natural science. Soon after, in 1578, Ivan Fedorov established Ukraine's first printing press in the town of Ostroh and printed the first Ukrainian primer for the Academy; in 1582, the year before he died, Fedorov printed 1200 copies of the first Slavic-language Bible. However, with the establishment of a rival Jesuit academy in Ostroh

in 1636, Ostroh Academy fell into decline and, when Prince Ostrozky died in 1638, it ceased to exist altogether. Or so it seemed.

Evidence of Ostroh's rich history is on display not only in the town's Museum of the History of the Book but also in the Academy, where a copy of the 628-folio "Ostroh Bible" rests on a shelf in the Rector's office. Even so, history somehow ceases to be history when one realizes that today's classroom, just down the hall from a room that houses an ancient indoor well, was once the living quarters of Carmelite monks whose remains, discovered in the 1994 renovation, lie just below in the old monastery's crypt.

In 2000, coinciding with the 900th anniversary of the town, Ostroh Academy was designated a "national university" in recognition of its significant role in Ukraine's national rebirth. Since then, the University has attracted not only international support but also well-recognized professors from throughout Ukraine as well as the U.S. and Canada. That year, Northern Illinois University (NIU) established a program to facilitate an exchange of American scholars, who teach summer courses at Ostroh, and Ostroh scholars, who study for their M.S. Ed. degrees at NIU.

When I accepted the invitation to visit Ostroh Academy, I was told my students were fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-year students majoring in English; the duration of my stay and the topic of my presentation would be entirely my choice. Because my doctorate is in English and because I had worked on *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau* at NIU since 2001, Thoreau seemed to me an appropriate foundation for a three-hour discussion comprising American literature and the American Renaissance in general. Once there, I managed to whittle the Ukrainian notion of a "small group" from fifty to twenty-five students per day, which, in the end, swelled each of my three teaching days to accommodate more and more enthusiastic learners.

To my surprise, not one of my eighty-five students, most of whom aspired to be interpreters or business managers, knew of Henry David Thoreau. Or *Walden*. Or Ralph Waldo Emerson. "Transcendentalism" was not in their admirably extensive vocabulary. Whom had they read? Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, and J. D. Salinger. Nonetheless, I explained, I had chosen Thoreau because he is an American icon. Every American student is required to read him at least once, beginning at about the age of fifteen, then again in college, and yet again in graduate school. Ask an American student who Thoreau is, I said, and they will tell you, at the very least, two

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things: (1) Thoreau went to jail for refusing to pay his taxes and (2) he lived for a while in a small cabin in the woods that he built by himself. While Thoreau wrote about both these experiences (and much, much more), I said, it is his experience in the woods at Walden Pond that is the subject of his major work, *Walden*. Undeniably an American classic, *Walden* is definitely a book they should be familiar with.

Though these students had not read Thoreau's essay on "Resistance to Civil Government," there was little I could teach them about the subject. Less than a year before they had boarded buses armed with no more than blankets, food, and the kind of moral fortitude that only the young seem to possess, headed for Kiev to take part in the "Orange Revolution," joined, but not led, by teachers and even the Rector. Later, when I asked Rector Pasichnyk if they had not put their jobs, even the very existence of the university, at risk by joining now President Yushchenko's opposition party, he simply smiled and said, "The students were going with or without us." It was clear to me he would have considered himself a failure as an educator had they not participated in Ukraine's first-ever effort at "civil disobedience."

Arriving at the University, I was surprised to see a wooded campus where students mow the lawn and weed flowerbeds. Some were digging a trench through which water would soon flow toward a fountain in front of their newly built library, inside which students were sanding and painting, determined to meet their goal of an October 30 grand opening. Rector Pasichnyk explained that students feel a sense of ownership when they are allowed to do these things themselves. It was an idea he might have taken from Thoreau's "Economy" (had he known of it): "I cannot but think that if we had more true wisdom in these respects, not only less education would be needed, because, forsooth, more would already have been acquired, but the pecuniary expense of getting an education would in a great measure vanish." Students at Ostroh did not build their living quarters, but they did reclaim and renovate the former Soviet military barracks built soon after Russia "liberated" Ukraine. These are conveniently located across the street from the Academy. In a sense, they are living the evolution of an era; that is, they do not "play" life, or "study" it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly *live* it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living?"

Lacking books for them, I asked my students to take turns reading passages from *Walden* from overhead transparencies, assuring them that there would be words they would not know: some words were common only in the nineteenth century, others represent Thoreau's penchant for archaic words; still others are understood to be Thoreau's attempt at humor. Nonplused, they read and provided what comment they could; they seemed particularly to appreciate Thoreau's play on the "Cenobites," who "see no bites." The sixth-year students,

compared to the fourth-year students, were noticeably reserved—which their teachers attributed to their having been longer under the Soviet system of education.

I wonder still why Thoreau, in 2005, was unheard of in this remnant of the former Soviet Socialist Republics. Perhaps it is simply because there was no access to Thoreau's work; American literature has until recently been low on Ukraine's priority list, although that is certainly not now the case. The Academy's library is growing day by day with English-language books, much of it literature, donated from the U. S. and Canada. Or, perhaps it was because there was no room in the former Soviet Union for individualism and originality. To be sure, Thoreau's "Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away" struck a chord with many of these students. Almost without exception, students mentioned this passage in the end-of-session short essay I had been asked to require of them—the ubiquitous "coherent five-paragraph essay" addressing the question "In your opinion, is Thoreau's *Walden* relevant today?"

Except for one young man, who wrote that he now thought he might follow that different drummer within him and retreat to live his life in a cabin in the woods, the essays generally argued that living alone in the woods—even as an experiment—was no solution. It was more important to accept life's challenges and adapt to life, to contribute to society; to live life to the fullest was impossible alone. But, they said, it was up to the individual to decide how to live—each should follow the voice within him or her. My account of Thoreau's life, that he had indeed been a social creature, that Walden Pond was an easy twenty-five minute walk from Concord, that then, as now, Walden Woods was a public park, had fallen on deaf ears in Ukraine—just as it often does in America. However, Thoreau's words had not.

The most thoughtful of the essays tackled the "Simplify, simplify" passage. One young woman astutely wrote that perhaps *Walden* would be more meaningful to middle-aged readers than to people her age. She admitted that she did not like to think about giving up the few material things she has only just begun to acquire. Self-gratification is important to college students and is the driving motivation behind larger ambitions for one's self and one's country. Ukraine is finally emerging into a world of technology and industrialization; will its people turn away from these in the name of simplicity? Probably not, but there is much to be done just to get to the point of consideration. In the town of Ostroh, the central hot-water system has not functioned for years, although the university has hot water in the mornings. Since the Chernobyl disaster, a deep distrust lingers about the safety of the nearby nuclear power plant. Unemployment is high and locals commute to larger towns to work. The university, all agree, is an economic boon as more and more students arrive; today enrollment is at 2000, up from 890 only five years ago, and many of the students prefer to rent flats in private homes rather than live in the dorms. While duplex-style housing is provided for teachers on campus, just a few minutes' walk past clay tennis courts and an outdoor stadium for track meets (and jogging), many of them, with their families, have spilled over into the town now too.

It may be that Ukraine's epoch of what Thoreau referred to in nineteenth-century New England as a time when "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" is over. I had not needed to explain Thoreau's "what is called resignation is confirmed desperation" to these students. They have been there, and the role Ukraine's young people played in the "Orange Revolution" suggests that they are not going back. For now, the Academy has resisted both Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic overtures to reestablish its ancient church (and

**What do folk music and Thanksgiving
have in common?**

Answer: Arlo Guthrie

See p. 11

renew the sixteenth-century rift that resulted in the Academy's establishment in the first place). Rather, this space, with its extraordinary acoustical qualities, is used for free cultural events such as the Rivne District Symphony's performance of Stravinsky's "Symphonies of Wind Instruments" that I attended just minutes after my last class. The previous day, at the end of classes, the stadium's loud speakers disrupted the campus serenity with the 5th Dimension's "Let the Sun Shine" heralding the arrival of a team of Ukrainian bicyclists on their way to Kiev promoting world peace. As I looked around, I found it impossible to identify within the crowd the two dozen Canadian students participating in a six-month exchange program this year—the Academy's own crusade for promoting world peace. During my visit, the Rector declared the entire campus to be a non-smoking area, and soon after, students began planning a "day of awareness" about the problems Ukraine faces from drugs and alcohol.

In these and many other ways, the National University of Ostroh Academy can be heard slowly "gnawing out," a twenty-first century example of the "egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it." And, as Thoreau writes, "Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this?"

I to Myself: A Review

Robert D. Richardson

I to Myself: An Annotated Selection from the Journal of Henry D. Thoreau. Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer. Yale University Press, 2007. 493 pp.

I to Myself, Jeffrey Cramer's volume of selections from Thoreau's *Journal*, is an attractive introduction to the man of *Walden*. The book is intended for the general reader and perhaps particularly for the reader who is just coming to Thoreau. Cramer is well aware of the fundamental appeal of the *Journal*, which was published in 14 volumes in 1906 and is currently being re-edited into what will be the authoritative edition by a team of editors led by Elizabeth Hall Witherell as part of the Princeton edition of the *Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*. (The Princeton edition, which is the most attractive and usable of the great scholarly editions of American writers that were launched in the second half of the twentieth century, is and will remain the definitive edition of Thoreau for the foreseeable future, although the pioneering work of Brad Dean on *The Dispersion of Seeds* and *Wild Fruits* as well as the late Natural History projects on which Brad was working when he died will have to be annexed somehow to the Princeton edition.)

Cramer notes that over twenty volumes of selections from Thoreau's *Journal* have been published; Cramer's own contribution will stand comparison with any of them. The only real drawback (aside from the fact that Sharon Cameron's terrific book on the *Journal*, called *Writing Nature*, doesn't appear in the bibliography) is that the book is too large to slip into one's pocket for a walk in the woods.

But *I to Myself* is definitely not a coffee table book. Its appeal lies in Cramer's canny selections and in the full but unobtrusive notes which fill the ample margins of the text.

Let me be plain. I like this book because Cramer likes so many of the *Journal* passages that I like too. He cites Thoreau's description of a January morning in 1838 when "Every leaf and twig was this

morning covered with a sparkling ice armor; even the grasses in exposed fields were hung with innumerable diamond pendants, which jingled merrily when brushed by the foot of the traveler. It was literally the wreck of jewels and the crash of gems." That gorgeous last phrase has hung in my mind for years. Cramer's note chases the phrase back to a line in Carlyle and beyond to Addison's *Cato* (1713) where the title character speaks of "the wrecks of matter and the crush of worlds." Now this is not perhaps heavy scholarship; a glance at *Bartlett's* will do it, but it is a welcome and helpful annotation of a brilliant and striking phrase. Cramer has a good touch. He seems to have learned something Thoreau knew and he quotes it on p. 25: "Nothing goes by luck in composition. It allows of no tricks. The best you can write will be the best you are."

Cramer is alert to Thoreau's sense of humor and he has one himself. At one point in *Walden*, Thoreau gets up on his high horse to face down his reader. "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live and could not spare any more time for that one." Cramer refreshingly prints what he found in Thoreau's *Journal*. "I must say that I do not know what made me leave the pond. I left it as unaccountably as I went to it . . . I went there because I had got ready to go; I left for the same reason." (p. 127)

Cramer includes lots of good passages to emphasize that Thoreau's love of nature was not a withdrawal from humanity. Over and over we find Thoreau saying "Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all; that is, her scenes must be associated with humane affections, such as are associated with one's native place for instance. . . . A lover of nature is preeminently a lover of man" (p. 152), and so on.

The scholar will know where he or she has to go for the last word on Thoreau's *Journal*. But even the scholar, along with the student or the most recent convert, will find this a richly rewarding, deeply satisfying volume when taken on its own terms.



Chad O'Neil rode his bike, "The Proletariat Chariot," from Canada to attend the 2008 annual gathering.
Photo courtesy Mike Frederick.

Abstracts of Papers Presented at the American Literature Association in Boston, May 24-27, 2007

Panel 1: Transnational Transcendentalism: A Teaching Round Table

Gary Scharnhorst, University of New Mexico

The teacher of transcendentalism in Germany enjoys the advantage of the students' broad familiarity with both continental romanticism and their knowledge of the orthodox religious doctrines against which Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Hedge, and others rebelled. Religion and philosophy are standard components of the Gymnasium curriculum. But German students are unfamiliar with the perfectionist or utopian streak in transcendentalism, which often strikes them as a brand of American naiveté. Significantly, Thoreau's political essays were largely unknown and unavailable in the former East Germany. Today there is a cadre of German scholars who publish prolifically on American transcendentalism, a reflection of its philosophical roots, and the standard writings of the transcendentalists are readily available in both English and in translation.

Ed Folsom, University of Iowa

When I prepared for my Fulbright year in Germany, I decided my best teaching strategy would be to back away from the cultural-critical approach I regularly used in my American classes, where I guided my students through their reading of the mid-nineteenth century authors into examinations of the repressed histories of race and gender, the critiques of democracy that most of them were only dimly aware of. Instead, I boned up on the German idealist philosophers who stood behind so much American transcendentalist teaching and prepared to help my German students see how their own German traditions had helped shape American thought. But my students not only knew the German philosophers better than I did (they had even read them in German!), they seemed uninterested in tracking the way German idealistic thought got refracted through the American transcendentalists' lens. What they were interested in, however, somewhat to my surprise, was the Civil War, the whole issue of slavery, and the aftermath of emancipation. And they were interested in *detail*.

I quickly began to discern that the connection my German students would forge with American literature would not be one of *their* heritage influencing *our* literature, but rather would be the *analogy*—often warped and refracted, but an analogy nonetheless—of the American national experience with their own. In these historical analogies, America became the ancient model, and Germany the recent example. To my initial surprise, these German students were far more interested in America's precedence to Germany than Germany's precedence to America. All the German memory-work going on while I was there in 1996—the reuniting of a long-divided East and West, the proposed Berlin holocaust memorial, financial reparations for families of those killed in the holocaust, the renewed pride in the German flag—echoed with the idiosyncratic specifics of

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American history and culture, turning the New World very much into the Old World for today's German students.

Jerome Loving, Texas A & M

My talk emphasizes the practical realities of teaching in a foreign country. In the Soviet Union in 1978, I felt compelled to conclude a course on the American Renaissance with a lecture on *A Farewell to Arms*. Russians deprived of western creature comforts then adored writers who included the materialistic aspects of American culture in their writings; Fitzgerald was a particular favorite. Moreover, there were inconveniences in the living conditions, such as hotel housing that tried to charge for dependents and expensive restaurants. In France in 1989, I discovered that even though U.S. authorities approved my courses to be taught at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, the French authorities wanted me to guest lecture only a few times and otherwise enjoy Paris. Instead, I volunteered to lecture for the United States Information Agency in Paris on Whitman at universities around the country.

It should be noted that Fulbright teaching fellowships are not free of political considerations. My professorial counterpart in Leningrad clearly did not appreciate my choice of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" as the subject of a lecture and did not hide his opinion from the Russian students. In Paris, even though the French had preceded the Americans in Vietnam, I learned from the chair of North American Studies at Paris III that a course on "American Literature and Vietnam" would draw few if any students because "our Vietnam" had been Algeria. In Vietnam, apparently, the French had used mercenaries.

Shan Te-hsing, Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica; and Providence University

Henry David Thoreau has been one of the most popular, if not *the* most popular, American authors in the Chinese-speaking world. In *The Importance of Living*, Lin Yutang's English bestseller published in New York in 1937, Thoreau was considered "the most Chinese of all American authors in his entire view of life." Scholars of American literature, such as Chu Limin, Chu Yen, Lin Yaofu, and Chen Chang-fang, associated him with traditional Confucian and Taoist ideas and regarded him as a living embodiment of these Chinese ideals. On the other hand, Thoreau's popularity among the Chinese reading public has been established primarily through the translation of *Walden*.

The first Chinese translation of *Walden* was done by Xu Chi and published in Shanghai in 1949. Due to the Chinese Civil War and the change of the political climate, this version fell into oblivion and did not reappear until 1982. The one which enjoyed tremendous popularity was the second translation published by World Today Press in Hong Kong in 1952, a USIS-supported cultural institution during the Cold War era. However, the translator's real identity has remained an enigma. Dozens of the Chinese versions of *Walden* have appeared over half a century and have successfully established Thoreau's reputation among the Chinese audience. Yet, a new scholarly translation with a critical introduction, a chronology, and ample annotations is needed to fully convey the richness and profundity of this American classic, its author, as well as its cultural, literary, and historical significances. With this transnational and translational perspective in mind, my PowerPoint presentation offers a general introduction to the Chinese readers' long-time interest in

Walden, an archaeology of the reception of *Walden*, and the guiding principles of my annotated translation project.

Panel 2: The Lay of the Land: Thoreau's Manuscript Surveys

Leslie Wilson, Concord Free Public Library: "Thoreau's Manuscript Surveys: Getting Beyond the Surface"

The approximately two hundred manuscript Thoreau land and property surveys in the Concord Free Public Library remain largely untapped by literary scholars. But this collection constitutes an important expression of methodology and thought parallel to Thoreau's writings. Although Thoreau undoubtedly felt conflicted about surveying, he reconciled himself to it sufficiently to work at it from the 1840s until close to his death, and put more than mere technical competence and pride in workmanship into it. Like his writings, his capturing of detail through surveying represents that "cultivation of a local, specific way of knowing"—the merging of objective data-gathering and subjective personal engagement with landscape—about which Peter Blakemore has written.

This paper explores Thoreau surveys of two representative Concord properties (a downtown business and a farm) to suggest the ways in which Thoreau maintains a personal presence in his survey work, offers a variety of data similar to that recorded in his journal in the 1850s (information he valued both in and of itself and also for whatever broader insight it might cumulatively provide), and conveys a sense of intimacy with and a conscious, informed appreciation of the observed and depicted landscape.

Patrick Chura, University of Akron: "Economic and Environmental Perspectives in Thoreau's Surveying Field Notes"

Working as a land surveyor was as close as Thoreau ever came to a regular source of income and "legitimate" profession. Some aspects of surveying, however, contradicted the preservationist ethos at the core of Thoreau's life philosophy. A useful measure of Thoreau's attempts to maintain the dictates of plain living and high thinking while operating a business of dubious environmental consequence is contained in his surveying notebook, "Field-Notes of Surveys Made by Henry D. Thoreau Since November 1849." Several Field Notes entries reveal the elevated purposes of Thoreau's surveying and his faith that the "better part" of his nature could permeate all areas of his life. The range of material left by Thoreau in the nonliterary venue of the field notes is an eloquent expression of Thoreau's aspiration toward a form of surveying ennobled by spiritual perception. This research is the basis of a book in progress, *The Measure of the Man: Henry Thoreau, Land Surveyor*, under contract with University Press of Florida and scheduled for release in 2009.

Sarah Luria, College of the Holy Cross: "The Literary Properties of Thoreau's Land Surveys"

Critics have been interested in Thoreau's naturalist writings—his essays and journals—but have paid little attention to Thoreau's property surveys. Indeed, critics have tended to value the property surveys only as a source of income and for the fact that they let Thoreau be outdoors, which meant that while he was performing the monotonous work of surveying, he could get in a little botanizing—

record some species of flora or fauna observed, etc.—on the side. But there is much to interest the critic in the property surveys themselves. Each statement in the field notebook Thoreau kept as surveyor contributes rich material about the Concord community: its habits of land use, its relationship to property and to nature, its history of the community, etc. The property surveys provide a relatively new and important angle for putting the transcendental community in its larger context—the economics and physical arrangement of the neighborhood in which it tried to establish itself. The most visually arresting of Thoreau's surveys—his seven foot wide survey of the Concord River—appears to be a survey of nature but is in fact a property survey as well because it was done to help settle a dispute over land and river use between the farmers and mill owners along the river. The river survey suggests that property surveying not only influenced but was inseparable from Thoreau's naturalist work and writings that we so admire.

Henry's Houses: The Houses in Concord That Henry Called Home

Wayne T. Dils

"In a true history or biography . . . , how difficult for a man to remember in what towns or houses he has lived or when! Yet one of the first steps of his biographer will be to establish these facts, and he will thus give an undue importance to many of them."

Thoreau *Journal*,
December 27, 1855

Despite Thoreau's protest, many visitors to Concord are drawn to the houses of the writers: the Old Manse (Emerson and Hawthorne), the Wayside (Alcotts, Hawthorne, Sidney), Orchard House (Bronson and Louisa May Alcott), and Emerson's house on Cambridge Turnpike.

But there are few places to see where Thoreau lived: many of the homes he lived in and wrote from are no longer there, and most of those that still exist are private residences.

The day after Christmas, 1855, when Thoreau was 38 years old and living in the Yellow House on Main Street, he wrote in his journal, "Recalled this evening, with the aid of Mother, the various houses (and towns) in which I have lived. . . . (*Journal*, December 26, 1855)." He listed the houses in chronological order, and the list included the 11 places he called "home" in Concord. Unbeknownst to him at the time, it would be a complete listing, for he died in that Yellow House on May 6, 1862.

The Birth House—Virginia Road (July 12, 1817–March, 1818)

Thoreau wrote of the house in which he was born: "Minott House on the Virginia Road, where Father occupied Grandmother's thirds, carrying on the farm. . . . Lived there about eight months. . . ." (*Journal*, December 26, 1855).

Thoreau's mother, Cynthia Dunbar, had lived on the Virginia Road farm for 14 years before her marriage in 1812. Cynthia's mother, Mary Dunbar Minott, was widowed again when her second husband, Captain John Minott, died in 1813. Mary was unable to maintain the farm by herself, so the following year she invited her daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter Helen to move into her "thirds" of the

Virginia Road house and run the farm. Mary then moved into the Red House on Lexington Road in Concord (see below).

John Thoreau Jr. was born in the Virginia Road house on July 5, 1814. His younger brother, David Henry, was also born in this house three years later, on July 12, 1817. But the farm was not that successful and their father split his time running a store in downtown Concord to help make ends meet.

The family only stayed in the two-story farmhouse until March, 1818, when John Sr. realized he would not be able to continue both farming and working at the store. Hard economic times and John Sr.'s poor health helped him make that decision. He gave up the farm and moved his family into the other half of the house his mother-in-law occupied on Lexington Road to be closer to the store.

The birth house was moved in 1878 from its original site at 215 Virginia Road about 300 yards east to 341 Virginia Road to make way for a new house, and it stands in the same place today awaiting renovation.

The Red House—201 Lexington Road (March–November, 1818)

Mary Dunbar Minott moved into the east half of “the red house” at 47 Lexington Road (now # 201) in 1814 with her son, Charles Dunbar, when her daughter and husband took over the family farm out on Virginia Road. She lived there until her death in 1830.

The Thoreau family (John Sr., Cynthia, Helen, John Jr., and Henry) moved into the other half of this house when they left the Virginia Road farm but only lived there from March until November, 1818. In those eight months, John Sr. regained his health and strength and, still determined to be a successful businessman, moved his family to Chelmsford, about 10 miles from Concord, where he opened another store.

The Red House, now painted white, is situated across the road from the Concord Museum and is a private residence.

Brick House—Main and Walden Streets (November, 1818–Spring, 1826)

Following a few years in Chelmsford and Boston, the Thoreau family returned to Concord in March, 1823. (There were six of them now, with the birth of Sophia on June 24, 1819, while they were living in Chelmsford.) The family rented the Brick House on the southwestern corner of Main and Walden Streets for about three years, until spring, 1826.

They returned to Concord because of an upturn in the family financial fortunes. In 1821, Cynthia's brother, Charles Dunbar, went into the pencil-manufacturing business in Concord. He was quite successful, and encouraged his brother-in-law to come back to Concord and help in the business.

The pencil-manufacturing business was located two blocks from Main Street on Walden Street. Charles Dunbar had formed a partnership with Cyrus Stow of Concord and called the business Dunbar & Stow, but Stow left the business shortly after John Thoreau joined them. Inexplicably, Dunbar also soon left the business which was then renamed John Thoreau & Co. By the following year (1824), John Sr. had improved the quality of his pencils, and his business was about to flourish, finally providing the family with a steady and substantial income for many more years.

The Brick House has since been torn down, and The Toy Shoppe now stands on the property.

Davis House – 166 Main Street (Spring, 1826–May 7, 1827)

In the spring of 1826, the Thoreau family moved about two blocks west on Main Street into what is known as the Davis House at 64 Main Street (now #166). It is a large white frame house that provided the family with much more room. With his pencil-making business more successful, John Sr. could now afford more luxury, although they were not apparently ready to take the big leap to home ownership.

The Thoreaus only lived here for a year, however, moving out on May 7, 1827.

Today this house is part of the Concord Academy complex.

The Shattuck House—185 Main Street (May 7, 1827–Spring, 1835)

The Thoreau family then moved literally across the street into the house at 63 Main Street (now # 185) that was owned by Daniel Shattuck. The reason for the move is not known, but they must have liked it, because they stayed there until spring, 1835, a remarkably long time for a family that had moved six times in the previous 13 years. The Thoreau family was living in this house when Thoreau began to attend Harvard in 1833, but moved out in 1835 while he was still at Harvard.

In 1844, Shattuck sold the house to William Munroe Sr., who coincidentally had been instrumental in creating the first American-made pencil business in 1812. Munroe's son, William Munroe, Jr. was the benefactor of the current Concord Free Public Library.

This house is now a private residence.

Colonial Inn House—48 Monument Square (Spring, 1835–Spring, 1837)

In 1800, Thoreau's paternal grandfather moved to Concord from Boston into a house on Monument Square that has since become the eastern part of the Colonial Inn. This was the Thoreau family introduction to the town of Concord.

While Thoreau was a student at Harvard, his family moved from the Shattuck House into what was then Thoreau's aunt's house on Monument Square. They lived here until 1837, the year Thoreau graduated from Harvard. Even though the pencil-making business was doing well, it was, perhaps, the \$185 a year Harvard tuition that may have prompted the move out of the Shattuck House into the Monument Square home, which may have been rent-free for them.

The Parkman House – Main Street (Spring, 1837–Fall, 1844)

In 1837, the Thoreau family moved from the Colonial Inn house to a home located on Main Street, at the back of the present Concord Free Public Library lot, and lived there until the fall of 1844. John Jr. died here on January 11, 1842.

While the family lived here, Thoreau reversed the order of his first and middle names, graduated from Harvard, started keeping a journal, taught school at the Masonic Hall for two weeks, started his own school, began a relationship with Emerson, took the trip up the Merrimack River with his brother, wrote his first lecture and essay, and then moved into the Emerson household.

It is believed that the Parkman house was torn down in 1872 to make room for the library building.

The Emerson House—28 Cambridge Turnpike (Spring, 1841–Spring, 1843)

In spring, 1841, Thoreau went to live with the Emerson family on the Cambridge Turnpike while the rest of the Thoreau family was still living in the Parkman House. Thoreau served as a handy man for Emerson, a friend to Lidian, and a big brother to the Emerson children for the two years he lived there.

Emerson bought this house, then known as “the Coolidge house,” and two acres of land in 1835 just before he married Lydia Jackson. He later purchased an additional seven acres of land that took his property line over to Walden Street. He lived here until his death in 1882.

In the spring of 1843, Thoreau secured a tutoring job with Emerson’s brother William on Staten Island, and he moved there in May. But Thoreau did not care for William Emerson and he missed Concord, so he gave up the job and moved back home with his parents (in the Parkman House) in December, 1843.

Texas House—Belknap Street (Fall, 1844–August 29, 1850)

On September 10, 1844, John Thoreau Sr. bought ¾ of an acre on Texas (now Belknap) Street that had the Fitchburg Railroad as the rear boundary. Thoreau and his father built the two-story house, including a shed in the back that housed the pencil-making business. This construction served as hands-on experience for Thoreau that he would put to good use the very next year.

That fall, the family moved into the Texas House while Henry was still living with the Emersons. Helen died here June 14, 1849, and the rest of the Thoreau family lived here until August 29, 1850.

Thoreau began to build his Walden Pond house in March, 1845, and it was to the Texas House that he walked along the railroad tracks from his Walden Pond house.

The family purchased the Yellow House at 259 Main Street on September 29, 1849, but renovations to that house took a year and the family remained in the Texas House until renovations were complete in August, 1850.

The Thoreaus then became landlords, renting out the Texas House from 1850 until the property was sold on Nov. 12, 1863, by Cynthia and Sophia Thoreau for \$950.00.

The Texas House was partially destroyed by fire in January, 1938 and was torn down in the spring of 1954. The door leading from the kitchen to the shed where the lead pencils were manufactured was rescued by Russell H. Kettell and that door was donated to the Concord Antiquarian Society, now housed in the Concord Museum.

Walden Pond house (July 4, 1845–September 6, 1847)

Thoreau began construction of his 10’ x 15’ house at Walden Pond in March, 1845, and moved in on July 4. While living at the Pond, he wrote the first draft of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* as well as the first draft of what would become *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. In July, 1846, Thoreau was arrested for non-payment of his poll taxes and spent the night in the Concord Jail on Monument Square. As a result, he wrote his most famous essay, “Resistance to Civil Government.” As a writer, the two years,

two months, and two days that Thoreau lived at Walden Pond were some of his most prolific.

Thoreau lived there until September 6, 1847, when he moved back into Emerson’s house on Cambridge Turnpike while Emerson was on his first European lecture tour.

Emerson bought the pond house after Thoreau moved out and then sold it to his gardener, Hugh Whelan, who moved it to the nearby bean field. Whelan wanted to expand the size of the house, so he dug a large cellar hole next to the house and was going to build the expansion over the new cellar. But before he got around to doing that, the house slid into the cellar hole, and Whelan abandoned it. The pond house was moved to the Clark farm on the Carlisle Road in 1849, and was dismantled in 1868 when the roof was used to cover a pig pen.

The Yellow House—255 Main Street (August 29, 1850–May 6, 1862)

The Thoreau family moved into the Yellow House at 73 Main Street (now # 255) from the Texas House on August 29, 1850, after a year of renovations. John Sr. died here on February 3, 1859.

Thoreau’s mother ran this as a boarding house. Thoreau’s room was the attic, and the pencil factory was in the south wing.

It was to this house that Thoreau’s publisher sent the 706 unsold copies of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack River* on October 27, 1853. Thoreau took them to his attic room and then wrote in his journal, “I now have a library of nearly 900 volumes, over 700 of which I wrote myself.”

Henry David Thoreau died here on May 6, 1862; his mother on March 12, 1872; and Sophia in 1876.

In 1877, Louisa May Alcott paid most of the purchase price of \$4,500 for the Yellow House for her widowed sister Anna and Anna’s two children to live in, and her parents, Bronson and Abby, also moved in shortly after the purchase. It remained in the Alcott family until the 20th century. The home is now a private residence.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Corinne Smith, Richard Smith, Joseph Wheeler, and Leslie Perrin Wilson for their contributions to this article.

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Z. W. Coombs and Four Early Photographs of Walden Pond

James Dawson

Several years ago I purchased a matted album page holding four turn of the last century photographs of Walden Pond. On the mat is written in ink “Photographs taken by Prof. Z. W. Coombs of Worcester, Mass.,” and each photograph is captioned on its back in pencil. The mat page is attached down its center so that

the photographs are removable. The photos are of the house site and cairn, Thoreau's cove, the lily pond, and the pine trees planted by Thoreau.

Information supplied with the page stated that the photos were taken about 1900 and were from an album from the estate of Edwin Z. Smith from Sewickley, Pa. Smith traveled extensively from 1898 to 1901 and after his return from Europe, visited Walden Pond accompanied by Prof. Coombs.

Prof. Coombs was Zelotes Wood Coombs (1865-1946), who, among his other interests, was an early Thoreauvian. A native of Wrentham, Massachusetts, Coombs graduated from Amherst College in 1888, received his M.A. there in 1895; and from 1890 until he retired in 1937, served at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in various capacities as instructor of English, professor of French, dean and secretary of the faculty. He became a professor in 1901, and in 1943 the honorary degree of Doctor of Science was conferred on him. His students affectionately nicknamed him "Coombsie" and thought that the versatile professor could fill any position from office boy to halfback, mathematician or geologist. He was never at a loss for words, whether he should say them or not, and was just as skilled at boxing as oration. He authored over half a dozen books and many monographs on Worcester history, a few of which are available on the internet. He was active in many civic organizations; he also loved the outdoors and was a great walker.

Coombs was one of the first members of the Thoreau Society. He gave a talk, "Thoreau and Worcester," at the first annual meeting on July 12, 1941, which was printed in *Thoreau Society Booklet Number One*, published in 1942. In it, he wrote about his attraction to *Walden*: "Interested in Thoreau from my earliest years, largely because of my familiarity with *Walden*. I early became interested in Concord, and have visited it countless times. I have even swum in Walden Pond, the supreme test and justification of a Thoreau enthusiast. My interest in Thoreau was emphasized because of his intimacy with Worcester, my home town, and with certain Worcester men."¹

Coombs was one of the very first photographers known to have taken a series of Walden photos. Each of these photographs measures 3 3/4" x 4 1/2", is titled (by Smith?) on the mat and captioned on the back, probably by Coombs. Titles are shown in italics. The photos are labeled as follows: [#1] "*Thoreau's Walden. Site of the Hut and Cairn*. Site of hut and cairn. The hut stood to [?] left of cairn, where the dark line can be seen on the ground. That is all that remains of the cellar"; [#2] "*Thoreau's Walden. The Lake*. View of Thoreau's cove. The hut stood in the woods to the left, back in the opening."; [#3] "*Walden. The Pines*. Thoreau's 'orchard.' The pines were set out in straight lines, comparatively few now remain."; [#4] "*Walden. The Lily-Pond*. Lily pond at end of Thoreau's cove."

The captions provide an interesting look into the level of knowledge in those early days. For the first photo, we now know from the archaeological work done by Roland Robbins in 1946, that the cairn was centered almost exactly on the site of Thoreau's house and not off to the side as the caption stated. It is not known what the dark line on the ground was. For photo #3, Thoreau wrote in his *Journal* for April 19th to the 21st, 1859, about setting out 400 white pines fifteen feet apart in a diamond pattern covering approximately two acres in what was his former bean field. That part of the *Journal* was not published until 1906. According to Walter Harding, many of these pines burned in an 1872 fire. Those remaining survived into the twentieth century as a Concord attraction until they were decimated by the hurricane of 1938. Photos of the pines in their

prime are uncommon, and by 1900, only one had been published by Hosmer in 1897. The pine trees were a living reminder of Thoreau's presence at Walden although few people then recognized them for what they were, as the 1872 cairn proved a better focus for visitors. For photo #4, the Lily Pond was in Wyman's meadow and a century later became a favorite of photographer John Wawrzonek, who has published several exquisite photographic studies of it, but no photos of it were published before the Coombs picture was taken.

No other Coombs photographs have been located, but it is quite possible that there are more out there waiting to be discovered in some attic or collection somewhere, and hopefully there are more of Walden Pond.

Coombs maintained a lifelong interest in Thoreau. He was especially enthusiastic about the formation of the Thoreau Society and wrote that it would "perpetuate the memory of a unique but outstanding character in American Literature"² and pledged all support in his power to the completion of the organization and to its later success. Unfortunately, Coombs died on April 23, 1946, when the Society was still in its infancy. To date, only these four photographs and a short article survive to document the interest of this pioneer Thoreauvian.

Many thanks to Robyn Christensen of the Worcester Historical Museum for her help.

Notes

¹Coombs, "Thoreau in Worcester" in Adams, *Booklet Number One*, p. 17.

²Coombs, p. 18.

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Thoreau's Walden Site of Hut and Cairn



Thoreau's Walden. The Lake



Walden. The Pines



Walden. The Lily-Pond

“Shall We Forever Resign the Pleasure of Construction to the Carpenter?”

F. John-V. Kitterman

In May of 2007, I taught a new course in a three-week term at my college at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia. It was called American Nature Writers and included reading *Walden*, Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, and Thomas Crow's *Zoro's Field*, and, most importantly, building a replica of Thoreau's cabin. We finished a rough exterior in three weeks, and in May of 2009 when the course runs again, we will add the fireplace and a garden. I wrote about the course in an article for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, but I didn't get a chance to discuss in some detail the effect of Thoreau on the cabin-building and the effect of the cabin-building on the students and me. I will attempt to do so here, using some passages from “Economy” as a foundation.

“Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe. . . . It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise.” This was a key passage for me in setting out on my own course, because Thoreau reminded me, in his borrowing-becomes-generous ironic way, that it is not always only the borrower who benefits in his project, but the borrowee as well. I needed the community to take an interest in our cabin because the school was not going to pay for most of the materials, which meant that I had to go door-to-door to ask for handouts. Thoreau made the sales pitch easy: the lumberyard foreman, the manager at Lowe's, the wood products owner, the window company salesman—all became partners in our desire to bring Thoreau to the Blue Ridge. I showed them my copy of *Walden*, the Jeffrey Cramer edition, with the photo of the cabin on the cover, while I watched each man's face. For many of them, it was their first encounter with Thoreau, and I could see the wide world of the book slowly open up in their eyes as I explained Thoreau's experiment. Others, it was clear, had heard of Walden Pond, probably in high school, but here was the cabin itself, stepping off the page, as it were, and into their lives. I think that teachers of Thoreau forget that even the most desultory students forced to read *Walden* in an American literature class years later remember the story of the “crazy” guy who went off to live in the woods alone. And here was his emissary, asking for some free lumber. Engaging the community—students, administrators, and friends, as well as building supply people—turned a description in a book into a real building, and Thoreau's vision from an academic assignment into an education.

“They were pleasant spring days, in which the winter of man's discontent was thawing as well as the earth, and the life that had lain torpid began to stretch itself.” Especially Richard III, he who could not stretch himself physically, needed to climb outside in the warming air and feel the sun's energy. In our shirt sleeves and jeans we were all one happy carpentry crew, well suited to this niche of open land, crisscrossed with blackberry bushes and deer trails, in the hardwoods behind the college. The air was so thick with butterflies, birds, insects, and youth that it seemed able to support our rough-cut walls as we lifted and braced them, many driving home their first nails in a lifetime. In the distance, too, we could often hear the Norfolk Southern train, and occasionally Navy F-18 fighter jets from Virginia Beach

would startle us with a 500 foot fly-by, no doubt using our mountains to substitute for Middle Eastern terrain. I kept having the feeling throughout the month, that if Thoreau were alive today he would appreciate the mix of old growth forest and modern technology.

"What of architectural beauty I now see, I know has gradually grown from within outward, out of the necessities and character of the indweller, who is the only builder. . . ." This arresting passage concerning "unconscious beauty" I found particularly meaningful as our cabin took shape. Living in a rural landscape where rusting doublewides and new McMansions often occupy the same crooked road, my students and I couldn't help but be struck at the way the cabin seemed to grow out of the ground naturally, like the surrounding oaks and locusts, under our guiding, hammer-innocent hands. It was as if we unconsciously knew what we were doing, and I have to say I had a naïve faith in the power of the word, of Thoreau's book, to conjure that building from the earth, as if beauty was really the path of least resistance. Or, metaphysically, as Heidegger writes, as if we had cleared a space for Being to manifest itself, and that Being was beautiful. This was a profound lesson, and one I am not sure anyone can realize who has not built a house himself, or at least who has not watched his own house reveal itself to him during his life, including the house of his body. During that month, we were really all bodies climbing the cabin's skeleton, and the sexual double entendres flew fast and furious, as screws and nails and hammers took on another life. I wondered: Thoreau, with his carpentry and word skills, must have known these same jokes, and another window onto the man was opened. The connection between the physicality of the body and the growth of the spiritual identity, as in the passage above, is natural and normal when left to the "unconscious truthfulness" of the setting, in this case our own little Walden in Virginia.

Finally, "'But,' says one, 'you do not mean that the students should go to work with their hands instead of their heads?' I do not mean that exactly, but I mean something which he might think a good deal like that; I mean that they should not *play* life, or *study* it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly *live* it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living?" Looking back, I find it increasingly clear that the cabin building and the book *Walden* are linked so obviously that perhaps we forget about the importance of carpentry in understanding Thoreau's quest. *Walden* is the most practical book, beginning with economy, always the first thing on most people's mind, as in this political season. But it is practical in another sense, in that it is with the physical—with building a cabin, building a class of students, and building a community, as I hope I have demonstrated—that the material world grows into the mental and spiritual. Having said that, it occurs to me that there could be no more practical way to disseminate Thoreau's experiment than to encourage schools across the country to build a Walden cabin. (If you build it they will come.) The seed is right there in the book, already germinating at thousands of colleges; the only problem is that classrooms make poor soil. However, if someone like me with no prior building experience can do it, anyone can. I know there are already cabins out there; I have seen the photos on the internet, and we have learned how influential social networking can be to spread ideas. Who hasn't read *Walden* and not had a secret desire to build his own cabin? But a campaign and support system, perhaps undertaken by the Thoreau Society itself, would push people from private fantasy to public fact. The initiative could start with single schools, then branch out into associations, like the one my college belongs to—the Appalachian College Association. Schools could

help each other. When my article came out in the *Chronicle*, I heard from colleagues near and far who were struck by the prospect of having a cabin on their campus, and wondered why they couldn't do it.

The fact is—they can. Anyone can. That's the message of *Walden*.

Treasurer's Report

Michael Schleifer

For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2008, the operating deficit was \$44,000. In 2005 the deficit was over \$80,000; \$68,000 in 2006; and \$52,000 in 2007, when we factor out a \$100,000 bequest. Two years ago, the finance committee charged management with the task of reducing the annual deficit to \$25,000 by the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009. Though we are not yet where we want to be, the substantial progress toward that goal cannot be ignored.

Income from memberships increased 20% following a nearly 14% increase in the previous year. Transition to a new membership management system is now complete, and much of the increase can be attributed to the resulting efficiency gains, along with the outstanding efforts of management and staff.

This fall, the Society is sponsoring a concert featuring Arlo Guthrie. Following discussion with the executive director, I am confident that the Society will raise \$15,000 or more if the show is a modest success. A board member has assured management that under no circumstances will the society lose money in what is a new and bold fundraising effort.

I have oft repeated that the Society needs consistent renewable sources of income in order to provide our programming and publications. In an organization such as ours, the primary financial support must come from our membership. Though we serve the general public as well, the primary beneficiaries of our activities are our members.

It is not easy to ask for money, but it is a task made easier when your board shows its belief in management with its own generosity. I bring to your attention a recent challenge to the board in which an anonymous board member agreed to contribute \$5,000 if the rest of the board would donate an equal amount. We achieved that plateau with room to spare, and that appeal raised nearly \$12,000. This from the board alone, which has fewer than 20 members.

The increased revenues we spoke of earlier, and dramatic cost cutting implemented in the past couple of years has moved the Society toward greater fiscal stability. As we gradually build an endowment fund (see the balance sheet facing), income from which will help cover operating expenses in the future, we will continue to follow the path of fiscal responsibility. We thank you for your continued support.

Special Tax Planning Opportunity For Year-end Charitable Gifts

The following special tax provision expired on December 31, 2007; however, it is widely expected that it will be renewed for 2008. When considering a year-end gift to The Thoreau Society, please note a provision of the tax law allows individuals over 70½ to make contributions directly from their IRA accounts to qualified charities. The advantage to the contributor is that the distribution will not be included in income. This can be of great benefit to (1) individuals who will lose tax benefits if their income (AGI) increases, and (2) individuals who do not itemize their deductions and therefore receive no tax savings from a contribution to charity. Since each taxpayer's circumstances are different, please consult your tax advisor.

The Thoreau Society, Inc.

Balance Sheet

As of March 31, 2008

Assets

Cash	\$21,514
Cash-Friends of Walden Pond	21,048
Accounts Receivable Program	
Services	1,291
Inventory	60,416
Prepaid Expenses	<u>6,837</u>

Total Current Assets \$111,106

Property and Equipment at Cost	8,602
Leasehold Improvements	<u>43,240</u>
	51,842
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(49,630)</u>

Net Book Value 2,212

Long term investments	318,859
Organizational Endowment Fund	14,510
Other Assets-Deposits	<u>150</u>

Total Assets \$446,837

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$41,412
Accrued Expenses	<u>1,467</u>

Total Current Liabilities \$ 42,879

Net Assets

Unrestricted

Investment in Property and Equip.	2,212
Board designated	281,777
Operating	<u>70,589</u>

Total Unrestricted Assets \$354,578

Restricted

Temporarily Restricted	42,904
Permanently Restricted	<u>6,476</u>

Total Restricted Assets 49,380

Total Net Assets 403,958

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$446,837

Note: The Society's collections are not capitalized and therefore do not appear on this statement.



Arlo Guthrie

THE THOREAU SOCIETY PRESENTS

ARLO GUTHRIE: LOST WORLD TOUR

Sunday, November 16, 2008
7 p.m.

Melrose Memorial Hall,
Melrose, Mass. (7 miles North of
Boston)

Tickets on sale:
www.thoreausociety.org

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We are indebted to the following individuals for information used in this Bulletin: Randall Conrad, Glenn Mott, and Richard E. Winslow III. Please keep your editor informed of items not yet added and new items as they appear.

President's Column

Tom Potter

Those who attended the Annual Gathering in Concord this past July had an opportunity to witness the awarding of the Thoreau Medal to two of our outstanding scholars and leaders. Both Bob Hudspeth and Beth Witherell expected to present the award to the other without realizing that each was in fact a recipient as well. It was a major coup to pull off this event so that neither was aware that he or she would be on the receiving end as well. Six months of secret negotiations with each leading them to believe that the job was to be a presenter without them knowing that they were also to be a receiver was a challenge. Members present applauded the efforts of both Beth and Bob as they received the much-deserved award for their years of scholarly contributions and leadership for the Thoreau Society. Both served as Presidents during challenging times. Both have made extensive contributions regarding the publication efforts of the Princeton Edition of Thoreau's works.

In addition to the above recipients, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas accepted the Thoreau Society medal for the efforts that her late husband, Senator Paul Tsongas, carried on in his efforts to protect and preserve our environment.

I want to make a special note of thanks to these recipients. Each in their own way has made our world a better place through preservation in legislative efforts and through inspiration in their writings and spirited leadership. Beth and Bob stand tall (literally) in the roll call of past Presidents of the Society. Senator Tsongas's name identifies special areas for all to appreciate for many years to come.

I personally want to express my gratitude to Bob Hudspeth for his willingness to suddenly step into the role of editor of the TSB following the death of our long-time editor and friend, Brad Dean.

Without hesitating, Bob accepted the call to carry on the task that Brad had performed so well. And now Bob retires, passing the responsibility to the soon-to-be-announced new editor. We are grateful for Bob's dedication and his attention to detail as he undertook this position while carrying on his many other editorial and scholarly pursuits.

On another note, a word of thanks to the generosity of several board members and especially to members Nancy Frass and Gayle Moore for their generous underwriting of our new sound system. This year we heard the lectures and reports as never before. Even Bob Galvin found it hard to sleep during my talk as he sat in his favorite chair high above the rest of us.

Thank you for your support as the Society continues to address its financial challenges. We are making significant headway in reducing our deficit.



Ashley Tsongas, Tom Potter, and Hon. Niki Tsongas at the annual gathering. Photo courtesy Mike Frederick.



Tom Potter, Beth Witherell, and Bob Hudspeth. Photo courtesy Mike Frederick.

Notes & Queries

We are grateful for the contributors to this issue of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*: **James Dawson** has been a life member of the Thoreau Society since the 1970s and has written a number of articles about Thoreau for the *Bulletin*; **Wayne T. Dilts** is a member of the Society's Board of Directors and the Supervisor of English at Butler High School in New Jersey; **F. John-V. Kitterman** is Associate Professor of English at Ferrum College; **Robert D. Richardson** has written biographies of Thoreau and Emerson and, most recently, of William James; **Dianne Piper-Rybak** is an editorial assistant for *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*. She telecommutes from Dixon, Illinois.

Thoreau cabins are becoming popular. Not only did F. John-V. Kitterman and his students build one, so did **Brendon Dolan**, president of Pine Street Carpenters in West Chester, Pennsylvania. He and his compatriots used Roland Robbins's plans for their cabin, which they built in the Tyler Arboretum in Media, Pennsylvania. Dolan says that their aim is to "help carry on [Thoreau's] spiritual and civic legacy."

Kent Bicknell, headmaster at Sant Bani School in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, organized a conference, "Conversations in a Changing World" at the school on October 5, 2007. He gave a presentation titled "Educational Ventures Influenced by the Transcendentalists Amos Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau: Parallel Perspectives of the 19th and 21st Centuries."

Glen Mott notes articles in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* opposing the "Plum Creek" plan to develop the Moosehead Lake region of Maine.

Corinne Smith saw the "Zippy" cartoon for April 28, 2008, that built on Thoreau's "different drummer" passage. Corinne also found Thoreau's claim that he "never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude" used in Cynthia S. Smith and Hillary B. Smith, *Why Women Shouldn't Marry: Being Single by Choice* (Barricade Books, 2008). Finally, she passes along a note about an article by Bob Datz in *Worcester Living* about the graphite mine in Sturbridge. Frederick Tudor (better known as the "ice king" of New England) bought the mine with a partner in 1828. In April 1860 accounts show "the sale in April 1860 of 1,068 pounds of graphite to H.D. Thoreau of Concord Mass."

Allan Amenta is working on the script for a short film, "A Beeper for Henry David." He plans to submit the work to several contests in the coming months.

Jim Dawson tracks sales of Thoreau-related items. Two of the latest are an 1873 edition of *Walden* with a pencil inscription "Written with a pencil made by Henry David Thoreau. The pencil given Miss Pearl Maynard by L. D. Drawbridge . . . 1916. It sold for \$89.20, which Dawson notes is "some expensive graphite!" The second is a set of the eleven volume large-paper edition of the 1894 *Writings of Henry D. Thoreau* that fetched \$2,500.

John M. Mahoney heard the July 12, 2008, "Writer's Almanac" by Garrison Keillor that noted Thoreau's birthday by reading a poem by Deborah Kang Dean.

Thanks to others who sent items; they will appear in subsequent issues of the *Bulletin*.

Notes from Concord

Michael Frederick, Executive Director

July marked the 67th annual gathering of the Thoreau Society, a tradition that goes back to 1941, when Walter Harding, Raymond Adams, and approximately one hundred Thoreau enthusiasts gathered for the first time in Concord to celebrate the life, works, and legacy of Henry D. Thoreau.

Thoreau Society members have produced the majority of Thoreau scholarship since the founding of the Society and have engaged both professional academics and ordinary readers alike. Our organization has served as an outlet for information about Thoreau. It has also served as a network for individuals wishing to connect to one another in order to explore Thoreau's ideas in greater detail, especially as his ideas strengthen with each passing year. As Alex Beam recently noted in the *Boston Globe* after attending our Annual Gathering, "If Thoreau were a stock, you would buy him."

Thoreau means different things to different people, and I rejoice that this cliché can convey meaning so clearly, that there are as many different interpretations of Thoreau as there are *individuals*. Personally, I know my own experience with and knowledge about Thoreau has been enriched through my involvement with the Thoreau Society to an extent that would not have been possible otherwise. To ensure that the Society continues to serve its members and the community, the Board of Directors and the staff have undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen the organization through acquiring "strict business habits," to borrow a phrase from *Walden*.

Last winter, several former Thoreau Society members received a letter from Edward O. Wilson encouraging them to renew their memberships. Wilson made a particular point about Thoreau being the "father of environmentalism," a legacy worth preserving and educating people about. As a result of this successful campaign, membership revenue is up significantly this fiscal year over last and is higher than any previous year in this decade: a \$15,000 increase in membership revenue.

Additionally, five individuals decided to become Life Members during the previous twelve months, the latest ones being none other than Edward O. Wilson and his wife Irene K. Wilson. Funds from Life Membership go directly to our permanent endowment fund at the Greater Lowell Foundation. The principal amount is never touched and is left to accumulate interest and investment income in perpetuity.

Thanks to the ongoing commitment of our members, last year's annual appeal income was also up significantly, higher than any of the previous years that we have information for this decade. In fiscal year 2008, we raised just over \$20,000. This year our Board of Directors has already pledged \$11,600 to the FY09 annual appeal, and I encourage everyone to consider making a donation to this year's annual campaign.

By the time you read this, we will have launched our new eStore, the third generation in three years of ongoing upgrades and improvements for our ecommerce business—a growing and significant source of funding. Second generation sales were up 100%, and we would be very pleased indeed if the trend continues with the latest release, which will also improve membership processing and highlight the important ongoing work of the Friends of Walden Pond, an activity of the Thoreau Society.

On November 16, 2008, the Thoreau Society will host Arlo Guthrie at Melrose Memorial Hall, located seven miles north of Boston or a 30 minute drive from Concord. The Arlo Guthrie benefit concert is sponsored in part by 92.5 *The River*, a solar powered, independent radio station located on the Merrimack River in Haverhill. The benefit concert will work in coordination with our eStore upgrade, as ticket sales will originate through the Shop at Walden Pond and eStore, while the added radio exposure will foster an awareness of the Thoreau Society and our work to people living in the Boston area. If you are interested in purchasing tickets or in becoming a sponsor—please complete the order form included in this issue.

Our success is made possible through our dedicated members, who continually support our programming and activities throughout the year. Please know that your continued support makes a big difference in what we can achieve, especially as our organization scales back expenses and improves its programming and outreach activities.

The Thoreau Society continues to fund and develop its core activities, such as its collections at the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, the publication of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* and the *Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies*. We sponsor sessions at the ALA and MLA each year and host the longest running, most relevant and exciting annual gathering on Thoreau anywhere in the world. But did you know we have also done the following?

- We conduct the “**Window on Walden**” series in cooperation with the Friends of Walden Pond, an activity of the Thoreau Society in cooperation with the Walden Pond State Reservation. Authors are invited to the Shop at Walden Pond to speak about their work and sign books for the public.

- The Thoreau Society participated in events in **Greenville Maine, July 21-23**, to commemorate the anniversary of Thoreau’s 150th trek through the Maine Woods. We participated in the unveiling and commemoration of the Thoreau kiosk in Greenville that marks the start of the trail, which makes a loop around the North Woods.

- We hosted a major conference in Minnesota at the **Minneapolis Athenaeum** with support from Walden University. Thoreau Society Board member Dale Schwie helped to arrange events.

- From October-December, the Thoreau Society and the Concord Free Public Library hosted a lecture series and exhibition, “**Reconstructing Thoreau’s World.**” Featured speakers included Beth Witherell, Donald Linebaugh, and Brian Donahue. Thoreau Society Board Member Robert Hudspeth and Leslie Wilson from the Concord Free Public Library collaborated to mount an excellent display of images and materials from the Thoreau Society archives at the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods.

- We collaborated with the **Concord Orchestra** to bring together several area artists for a gallery display in the lobby of Concord’s Performing Arts Center, featuring scenes from Walden and Concord. The Orchestra played “Sounds of Concord: Thoreau and Other Heroics” and Bernard Hoffer’s Piano Concerto, with a second movement titled “Walden,” complete with many bird sounds and a great bull frog.

- In April, the Thoreau Society inaugurated the **Thoreau Society Lyceum**, a lecture series exploring the ideas of leading professionals with an interest in the ideas of Henry Thoreau.

- The Thoreau Society is partnering with the **University of Massachusetts at Lowell** to produce a digital, critical edition of “Civil Disobedience,” and we have received a grant from UMass for the project, which is slated to be freely available online when completed by the end of 2009.

- We continue to lead our annual excursion to **Baxter State Park** and plan to reserve a campsite near Mount Katahdin in 2009 for those who would like to experience the mountain as Thoreau did.

Obituary: Bob Burke

Thoreau Society Member Bob Burke, of Denver, passed away July 17, 2008, of a sudden illness. He was the beloved and cherished husband of Martha Chamberlin. He is also survived by his brother, David (Kathy) of North Haven, CT; niece, Kimberly Burke (Bill Conner) of Pacific Palisades, CA. Memorials may be made to the Thoreau Society, 55 Old Bedford Rd., Concord, MA 01742.

(From the *Denver Post*, July 20, 2008.)

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From the Editor

With this issue of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* I conclude my editorship. While I undertook the responsibility with a heavy heart after Brad Dean died, I have found the experience to be deeply rewarding. The responses I received from contributors and readers showed that the issues are important to the membership and that the ideas are consistently stimulating. My sincere thanks go to all who have contributed to the *Bulletin*.

The Board of Directors has appointed Leslie Wilson, Curator of the William Munroe Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library, to be the new editor. Her email address is lwilson@minlib.net. I will, however, continue to write the "Additions" column, so please continue to send bibliographic items directly to me: robert.hudspeth@cgu.edu.

As I leave I want to take note of the extensive help I have received, not only from the several contributors, but from several people who, although very much in the background, are very important to the success of the *Bulletin*. Four readers review each issue in draft and save me from more mistakes than I would care to admit: Dave Bonney, Ron Hoag, Sandy Petrulionis, and Ed Schofield. In addition, Ed helped me solve several quirks in the Pagemaker program I use to compose the issues. Readers always find Richard Winslow III in the list of persons who have contributed information for each issue, but that brief note never shows how many items he sends nor the assiduity with which he finds material. He will have an article expanding our information about early reviews of Thoreau's work in a subsequent issue.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS NEEDED FOR CONCORD AND SURROUNDING TOWNS

Researchers at Boston University are studying the effects of global warming on spring arrival times of songbirds to the Concord area. For past years, they have used the journals of Henry David Thoreau and ornithologists Brewster and Griscom. Now, they need records of arrival times for any years since 1960. If you have records (or know any one else who has such records) of the arrival times of songbirds to Concord, Acton, Carlisle, Bedford, Lincoln, Wayland, Sudbury and/or Maynard for any recent span of years, please contact:

Libby Bacon, email: bacon@bu.edu or
Richard Primack, email: primack@bu.edu.
Tel: 617-353-2454

See: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/walden.html> for similar work done in their lab.

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Established in 1941, the **Thoreau Society, Inc.**, is an international nonprofit organization with a mission to honor Henry David Thoreau by stimulating interest in and fostering education about his life, works, and philosophy and his place in his world and ours; by encouraging research on his life and writings; by acting as a repository for Thoreauviana and material relevant to Henry David Thoreau; and by advocating for the preservation of Thoreau Country. Membership in the Society includes subscriptions to its two publications, the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* (published quarterly) and *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* (published annually). Society members receive a ten-percent discount on all merchandise purchased from the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond and advance notice about Society programs, including the Annual Gathering.

Membership: Thoreau Society, 55 Old Bedford Road, Concord, MA 01742, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 369-5310; fax: (978) 369-5382; e-mail: info@thoreausociety.org.

Merchandise (including books and mail-order items): Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742-4511, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 287-5477; fax: (978) 287-5620; e-mail: info@shopatwaldenpond.org; Website: www.shopatwaldenpond.org.

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